



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

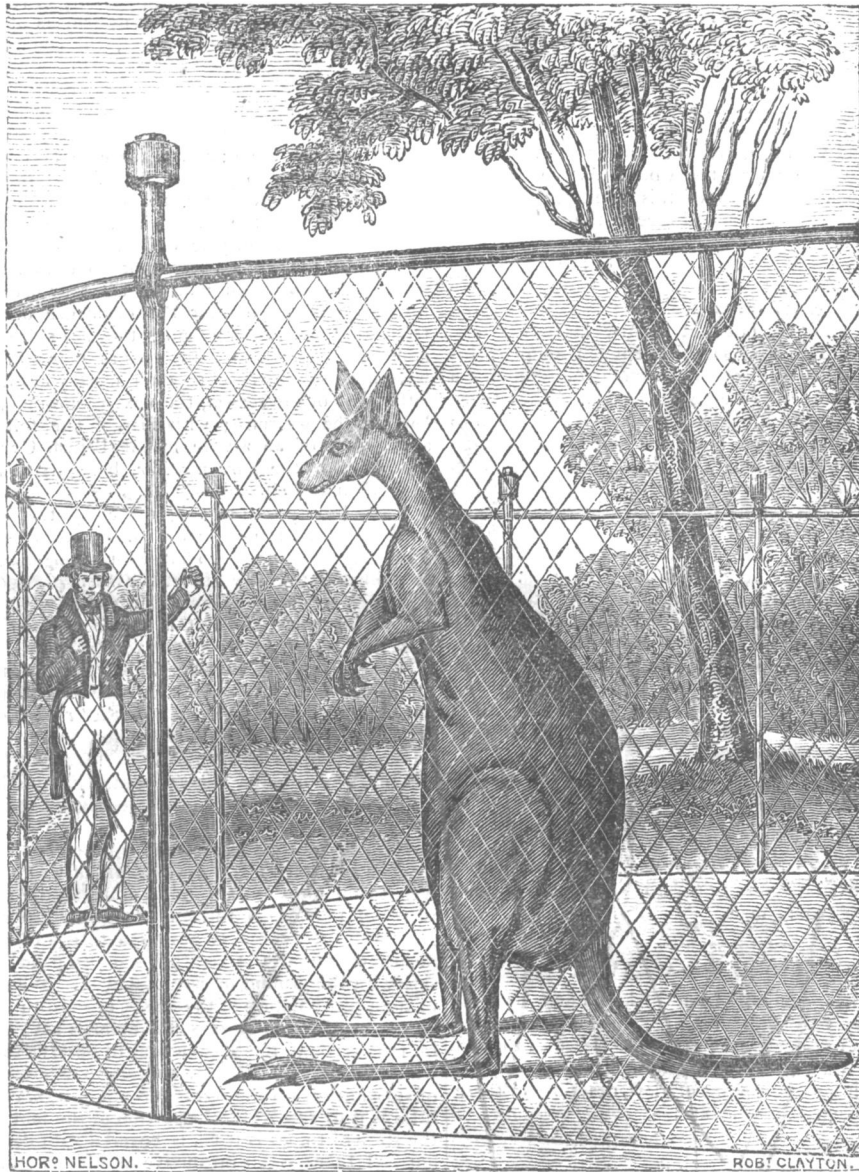
THE
DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL

CONDUCTED BY P. DIXON HARDY, M.R.I.A.

Vol. IV.

JUNE 4. 1836.

No. 205.



THE KANGAROO.

The kangaroo is a native of New Holland, where it was first discovered by Sir Joseph Banks. Its head is small and taper, ears large and erect, upper lip divided, the end of the nose black, nostrils wide, lower jaw shorter than the upper, and there are whiskers on both; it likewise has strong hairs above and below the eyes; its head, neck, and shoulders are small, the lower parts of the body increasing gradually in thickness; its tail is long and taper, very thick at its junction with the back; its fore feet are extremely short, and are mostly used in digging, or bringing its food to its mouth; it moves altogether on its hind legs, making successive bounds of ten or twelve feet, with

VOL. IV.—NO. 49.

such rapidity as to outstrip the fleetest greyhound; it springs from rock to rock, and leaps over bushes seven or eight feet high, with great ease; it has five toes on its fore feet—three on the hind, the middle one very long; the inner one is divided down the middle into two parts.

The kangaroo rests on its hind legs, which are hard, black, and naked on the under side. Its fur is short and soft, of a reddish ash colour, lighter on the lower parts. It is the only quadruped our colonists have yet met with in New South Wales that supplies them with animal food. There are two kinds. The largest that has been shot, weighed about one hundred and forty pounds; and mea-

335

sured, from the point of the nose to the end of the tail, six feet one inch; the tail, two feet one inch; head, eight inches; fore legs, one foot; hind legs, two feet eight inches; circumference of the fore part of the body, near the legs, one foot one inch; and of the hind part, three feet. The smaller kind seldom exceed sixty pounds.

This animal is furnished with a pouch, in which its young are nursed and sheltered.

NEW HOLLAND.

Relative to the aborigines of this country, the following account is given by a gentleman who returned home some years since:—The climate of Botany Bay is remarkably temperate—its soil abundantly productive of vegetable matter. Trees of vast size and utility adorn its forests. The fruits of Europe and of Asia thrive well in its valleys; the seas abound with fish, and birds of the most beautiful forms and plumage adorn the wood. When governor Phillips first took possession of this country, the natives were the most stupidly wretched race in the universe. A gentleman employed by the governor in the commissariat department, buttoned a surtout on one of those men, and his companions gazed at him with an odd and stupid wonder. When the coat became troublesome to the wearer, he wished to remove, but not destroy his new finery. There was not, however, sagacity enough amongst his surrounding friends to discover the mode of removing a single button out of its corresponding hole. When these men saw the effects of fire-arms, they considered them to be living beings, and a gun left here and there through the country was, for a length of time, sufficient to keep them at an awful distance. Some of these people are nearly black, others copper-coloured—their heads long, and slender at the extremity. They have bushy eye-brows, sunk eyes, flat noses, with distended nostrils. Caverns, huts, and arching trees, serve them for habitation. Fish, birds, eggs, caterpillars, and fern roots, constitute their food. The men select their wives from hostile tribes. The lover lies in wait for the lady: his courtship is short—it consists in a knock-down blow with a cudgel; he then ravishes the female, and drags her away by main force; she is then his wife, and is incorporated with his tribe. Polygamy was practised, and chastity deemed a vice rather than a virtue.

When the boys are admitted into the class of men, a bone is gracefully stuck through the septum of the nose. A circle is then formed of these savages, who, bearing wooden swords stuck in girdles, surround the youths, and run about on their hands and feet like dogs. After this, a dexterous and veteran operator knocks out a front tooth from each young man.

THE SPIDER, OR WEAVER.

This insect has generally been looked upon by most persons as a very troublesome, noxious, and disgusting creature; and even our great poet of the Seasons, though in many respects a strict observer of nature, contemplating this insect in only one point of view, describes in these harsh terms its predatory habits:—

“Where, gloomily retired,
The villain spider lives, cunning and fierce,
Mixture abhorred! Amid a mangled heap
Of carcases, in eager watch he sits,
O’erlooking all his waving snares around.”

The fine feelings of the poet were doubtless aroused by the shrill, distressful cry of the poor helpless fly, when caught by the spider in his mesh; and in the above manner the muse indignantly portrayed him.

But, after all this, the spiders are a class of insects highly useful to man; and their actions and habits are well deserving of study, more especially in autumn, the grand season with them of bustle and activity. There are no species of this insect that commits depredations on any thing useful to mankind; for though we often hear of the injury done to fruit-trees by the “red spider,” yet, strange to say, that which is called the red spider is not a spider, but a species of *coccus*. The common house-fly, it cannot be denied, is, in many cases, also very useful, being, as it

were, a sort of scavenger, and destroying matters, the accumulation of which would soon become offensive and wholly disgusting; but by its haunting our houses in such vast numbers, especially towards autumn, it is rendered not only a troublesome inmate, but a perfect nuisance; and the many plans and stratagems which have been adopted in order to get rid of the house-fly are well known and practised in almost every town and village in Ireland.

Now the whole species of spiders feed upon animal substances, and they almost universally take and kill their own prey; but perhaps the generality of readers are not aware that spiders are as great destroyers of that troublesome and truly detestable insect, the common house bug, (*cimix*), as they are even of flies. How exceedingly careful some persons are to brush away cobwebs from about beds and such places; never considering, that if there are bugs in the house, they are brushing away their best protectors from them; and if there be none in the house, their best guards to prevent bugs from forming an establishment. Still, however, the common house-fly is a favourite food with the garden and house spider, and they set snares for it in all places where it has a chance of passing; and if the spiders were not to cut off tens of thousands, the flies would multiply till they became an absolute plague. Even after the departure of the swallow tribe, another of their enemies, they are still so numerous, and would deposit so many eggs in places of safety, that, were not the spiders more than usually active during the latter part of the season, the next year would, in all probability, be swarming with flies. The following is an abridgment of an article in the British Cyclopædia, on the habits of the garden spider, being written in a style both plain and elegant:—

“The beauty of the web, especially that of the large garden-spider—the skill with which it is placed, always in what may be considered an insect thoroughfare, presenting its meshes in the very line of the insect passage, and being proof against a considerable degree of wind and rain—the industry with which it is repaired when torn, or replaced when any part becomes too dry in its consistency—are all perfectly admirable. This is not the place for entering upon the details; but it is impossible to avoid remarking, that if there were no other creatures preparing for the winter but the garden-spider, there would still be an ample field for observation.

“Suspended in its central spot, with the head downwards, which gives the animal the advantage of the impetus of its weight, both in darting along the lines, and in holding on with its claws, this spider feels, without the trouble of watching, the vibration of every part of the web, to the most distant line; and also the general character of that which throws it into a state of vibration. But, even then, there is always a thread in readiness, by means of which the creature can drop down and seek safety on the ground in case of danger. We are ignorant of the precise nature of the senses, or substitute for senses, by means of which these small animals act; but it is not on that account the less curious to observe the tact with which this species of spider appears to ascertain what sort of substance is on the web. It is not by sight certainly—as little is it by touch,* for the portion of the foot with which the state of things is tried, is covered with delicate hairs; but still there is an instinctive discrimination. A bit of leaf, or any other inanimate substance, is not advanced upon directly; the spider and web are thrown into a vibratory motion for a little while, (the equal bearing upon all the main braces of the web, and the perfect vibration which the occupant at the centre can produce, notwithstanding the unequal length of the braces, are no bad mechanical study); and if it cannot be cleared by that means, the spider advances to it, and cuts it adrift, using a gy to steady it, if there be a chance of a second entanglement in its fall. If the prey alights, not very strong, nor with too hard a covering, it is instantly pierced by the fangs; but if strong, and not easily pierced, it is shrouded in a

* The writer of this is sorry that he cannot agree with the ingenious author on this point. It must surely be something like what we call touch, that enables the spider to discover what is on the web.